**Nile Basin Development Challenge**

Nile 2: Integrated Rainwater Management Strategies: Technologies, Institutions and Policies

**Fogera Trip Report**

**Travelers: Zelalem Lema and Aberra Adie**

Date: 17-20 October 2012

**Purpose of the trip:**

* Visit the Fogera IP’s action research plots at Wej Awramba Kebele to assess the performance of the forages in the enclosed area and backyards and to take sample for estimation of biomass yield
* To have an insight of the farmers and the local IP technical group members about the progress of the action research and the way forward
* To learn about the status of coordination of the local IP by the local facilitator and provide assistance in areas of need

**Day 1: Wednesday October 17, 2012**

Zelalem and Aberra traveled to Bahirdar in the evening

**Day 2: Thursday October 18, 2012**

Zelalem and Aberra traveled to Woreta on a rented car and met the members of the technical group of the IP, Ato Belay Dejen (Head of the livestock unit of the Fogera district OoA) and his team.

The ILRI team briefed the purpose of the visit to the TG members and discussed the possibility of visiting the action research site. It has been understood that some of the key members of the TG were not around and so it was suggested that the visit should be in the next day morning after we arrange the participation of the research centers and B/Dar University and we have all (at least most of) the TG members should take part in the field visit. Belay took the assignment of communicating and arranging the DAs and the farmers at the site about our travel to the pilot for the next day morning. On the same day the ILRI team then traveled back to Bahir Dar and then to Andasa and Adet research centers and Bahirdar University to meet the staffs who were assigned to the IP and also their respective supervisors at offices for strengthening /institutionalizing their partnerships.

Here the ILRI team discussed that most of the representatives of the Research Centers and Universities in all our three sites are those who were involved in the base line survey and most of their profession is not related to the fodder and soil and water conservation background who could help the IP through being a member of TG to give technical inputs on designing and implementing of the pilot joint work. On the other hand we have also discussed that their participation was not made institutional rather it was personal since they were involved in base line survey of the project they were coming to each IP meetings by understanding. This means the university college deans and directors of the research centers don’t have any full information about the importance of being represented at IP and their role. Then we decided to meet the IP representative supervisors at the organization to brief on NBDC, N2 and IP and request to assign an appropriate professional for the technical backstopping of each IP’s activities.

Accordingly, the team met Ato Kerealem, Director of the Andasa research centerin his office and explained the purpose of the visit and the need to strengthen the partnership. Ato Kerealem who once participated in one of the IP meetings told that he is well aware of the IP but has less information about the progress and the status of the action research. He then called up on Ato Sewnet, a technical staff who is more relevant for participating in the IP and action research process. Both Kerealem and Sewnet confirmed that they are most willing to be member of the IP and contribute their part in the process of the action research as a member of the TG too. However, they made it clear that in order to assign a technical person who can participate in the IP consistently; they need a formal letter from ILRI to make the partnership institutional rather than personal. The ILRI team agreed to write a formal letter with a brief ToR to ease the process.

The Adet Agricultural Research Center Director was communicated by telephone to send their representative for the field visit. The ILRI team traveled back to Bahir Dar and visited Bahirdar University in the afternoon and met Dr Belayneh Ayele, Dean of the college of Agriculture and Environment Sciences who replaced Dr Eneyew who was our previous contact at the university during the base line survey IP meetings in assign staffs. Dr Belayneh was briefed about the IP and its evolution. He willingly assigned Dr Mussie, vice for Undergraduate Research and Community Service, the technical person relevant to the IP and the action research while he also demanded a formal letter from ILRI for official engagement in the platform.

**Day 3: Friday October 19, 2012**

The technical group members including staff of Andasa and Adet research centers, Bahirdar University, woreda sectors offices, Ethiowelands and ILRI gathered at the woreda OoA in the morning and had brief updates on the IP and the action research. The team then traveled to Limbichosh village at Wejawramba kebele where the action research is being piloted.

The team met the group of target farmers harvesting the grass grown in the project’s protected (enclosed) pasture land. Brief introduction of the visiting team and the purpose of the visit were made by ILRI members and Keffie of Ethiowetlands who is the local facilitator for the IP. Following the introductions, visit to the pasture development both in the closed area and backyard has been made.

***Pasture performance****:* The pasture in the closed area predominantly composed of Cynodon (grass) and Trifolium (legume), both native species, has a very good mixture in terms of nutritive quality. The Trifolium which is an annual species is currently over mature and shattering seeds which could be potential seed bank for the subsequent season. The farmers kept it long in waiting for the IP members to see the performance and are currently harvesting the pasture for hay making. Among the introduced fodder varieties, Sesbania, Cowpea and Napier grass are doing well though they were planted in small quantities for testing. Vetch and Rhodes grass were also planted but they did not come up in the closed area. Some vetch patches were observed to grow at the backyards. The Vetiver grass which was planted on strips across the slope of the closed area is also growing well.

**Updates of the project activities by the farmers**

The farmers explained the process and the evolution of the area closure and fodder development project to the new visitors. According to the explanation, the community was formed 10 years before and has eventually developed common understanding and culture of collective actions in an organized manner. They have a number committees dealing with different community issues. One of these committees is the pasture development committee which has got its own bylaw. The primary driver which led to the area closure was the shortage of feed during dry season and its mismanagement during the rainy season. The farmers expressed their satisfaction with the performance of the pasture in the closed area and the introduction of additional pasture species to increase the quality and quantity of the fodder. They also reported that they hosted a number of farmers and woreda officials for a field day recently.

Some farmers (5 men and 2 women) have already started fattening businesses using the pasture being harvested from the closed area. The DA of the community has been keeping record of all processes in his diary starting from the inception of the idea of area closure by the community. He also has collected the socioeconomic and agro ecological data of the community. The community also has agroforestry and forest reserves management projects (which are guarded by 4 men employed by the community) in addition to the fodder development program. Future plan of the community includes establishing a nursery site by the nearby river to raise seedlings of different grasses and multipurpose trees which could help developing their multiple projects.

***Field day****:* The field day which was initiated by the farmers themselves took place on 10th October 2012. There are a total of 60 farmers participated (42 male and 18 female) and a total of 23 woreda and kebele level officials and experts were participated mainly from IP members. The purpose of the field day was to buy in the community perception and scale out the practice to a wider community in the kebele and beyond and also to create awareness among IP members about the progress of the pilot work and for their future planning for integration of their activities at the site. Famers from the neighboring households and villages including those who refused the intervention initially were summoned for the field day. All the famers saw the difference in pasture performance between the closed area and openly grazed area and were all convinced that the approach is worth trying.

***Bylaw formulation****:* The community bylaw for management of the closed area has been prepared and sent to the different relevant offices for information and support.

**Challenges as mentioned by the farmers:**

* People from the community are still walking through the closed are and therefore the area has to be fenced soon. The farmers need support of the woreda for some costs of the fencing. The farmers will contribute wood and labor.
* The annual species (especially the clover which is the most nutritious part of the pasture) is drying in the process waiting for the IP members to visit.

**Discussion points mentioned by the visiting team**

* What is the future plan and vision of the community in relation to the pasture development? The farmers responded by saying that the project is intended to benefit all members of the households (men, women and children) by creating job and income opportunities. As a result 15 young men and women have been organized in an association for apiculture. Members of the youth association contribute money (Birr 50.00/person/month) for their development project activities. The pasture is also used as bee forage in this regard. Some women are engaged in fattening and look for dairying alternatives.
* Zero grazing for all animals (not only fattening animals) and send children to school
* The project opened a good opportunity to institutions like Bahirdar University for community service and common learning activities
* Zero grazing saves energy of the animals which is wasted in search for feed, gulley and soil erosion are reduced
* It is very interesting to learn that farmers closed land based on their own interest
* Diversifying fodder options and identifying niches for future activities would be advisable. Seeds of Oats, Vetch, Sesbania, Napier and Leucaena for possible additional forage varieties are available at Andasa research center
* Pasture development practice like over – sowing, planting fodder trees, rogging/removing aggressive weeds and fertilizing could be practiced in future plans
* Some of the introduced fodder varieties (Rhodes and Vetch) did not perform well. Varietal selection should consider waterlogging and altitude, seed viability, land preparation, time of planting, etc. Expert consultation is important in this regard
* Feeding should be strategic rather than general feeding. If it is for fattening, the season for fattening, feed adaptation, selection of animals for fattening and deworming the animals are some of the prerequisites
* Addition of other income generating activities like poultry may help engaging women and reduce the need for sale of crops (which are needed for household consumption) for cash
* The area should remain closed even after the harvest of the forage so that it is not trampled by animals and people. For this reason, fencing is critical to be done immediately
* Backyard development could include fruits and vegetables which are important for livelihoods in addition to fodder

The meeting ended with appreciation to the community for their enthusiasm and promises and commitments from the different institutions of the technical group.

**Commitments of the woreda OoA extension unit to the community**:

* Provision of AI services
* Provision of improved poultry breeds
* Facilitation of improved dairy heifer access
* Development of nursery sites for fodder species and other planting materials
* Supply of inputs like fertilizer and improved seeds
* Supply of improved bee hives
* Provide necessary inputs (apart from wood and labor) to the fencing work

**Commitment by Andassa Research Center**

* Strengthen the linkage by assigning a permanent staff who can consistently engage in the IP and action research processes
* Support the action research by working closely with the community and the IP members
* Supply of forage planting materials
* Supply of technical expertise in a form of training and follow up
* Facilitation of access to improved breeds of cattle
* Provision of training to farmers and development agents
* Facilitate experience sharing visits to the farmers

**Commitment of Bahirdar University**

* Strengthen the linkage by assigning a permanent staff who can consistently engage in the IP and action research processes
* Support the action research by working closely with the community and the IP members

**Commitment of Adet Research Center**

* Strengthen the linkage by assigning a permanent staff who can consistently engage in the IP and action research processes
* Support the action research by working closely with the community and the IP members
* Facilitate experience sharing visits to the farmers
* Provision of training to farmers and development agents

**ILRI’s commitment**

* Write letter to Andasa Research Center, Adet Research Center and Bahirdar University so that they formally engage in the IP and each assign technical person from their institutions to sustainably participate in the IP and the action research processes
* Provide capacity building training to IP facilitators and focal persons of the action research

**Farmers’ commitment**

* Prepare wood and labor for fencing the closed area
* Prepare nursery site
* Participate in training and experience sharing visits when arranged by the technical group

**Ethiowetland’s commitment**

* Organize discussion of technical group for planning future activities including: training and experience sharing visit, fencing the closure area, nursery preparation, etc
* Organize next IP meeting

The visiting team had a brief reflection meeting in the office OoA. The members of the technical team have been reminded of the commitments each of them made during the meeting with community. The group set a date to meet urgently and set an action plan for the committed activities. The tentative date agreed was Monday October 29, 2012 to meet in the OoA. Ato Keffie the local facilitator together with Ato Belay, the current focal person has taken responsibility of organizing the meeting and following the overall processes of activities ahead.

**Day 4 – Saturday October 20, 2012**

The ILRI team traveled back to Addis

**Annex 1: List of TG members who took part in the field visit**

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| **No** | **Name** | **Organization** | **Responsibility** | **Mobile** | **E-mail** |
| 1 | Getasew Zewdu | Fogera Woreda Cooperative Office | Extension Worker | 0918186349 |  |
| 2 | Muluken Wubeite | Fogera Woreda Agri and Rural Development Office | Acting Head | 0918179083 |  |
| 3 | Getasew Abebaw | Fogera Woreda Office of Adminstartion | Acting Head | 0918095500 |  |
| 4 | Aklog Tegin | Fogera Woreda Land Adinstration and Environmenal protection Office | Expert | 091808273 |  |
| 5 | Belay Dejen | Livestock Department | Head | 0918094921 |  |
| 6 | Teka Belete | Wej Awramba Kebele | Development Agent | 0918189243 |  |
| 7 | Wassihun Baye | Wej Awramba Kebele | Development Agent | 0918021544 |  |
| 8 | Keffie Minale | EWNRA (Ethio-Wetland) | Field Office Coordinator | 0918706794 | [mkeffie@yahoo.com](mailto:mkeffie@yahoo.com) |
| 9 | Yenesew Abebe | ARARI: Andasa Livestock Research Centre | Researcher | 0918719831 | [yenesew\_abebe@yahoo.com](mailto:yenesew_abebe@yahoo.com) |
| 10 | Brihanu Agumas | ARARI: Adet Research Centre | Researcher | 0911068877 |  |
| 11 | Tesfaye Hailesilassie | Fogera Agri and Rural Development Offioce | Extension Leader | 0918711059 |  |
| 12 | Dr. Mussie H/Melekot | Bahir Dar University: College of Agri and Environmental Science | Undergraduate Research and community Service Vice | 0918700333 | [musiehailu@yahoo.com](mailto:musiehailu@yahoo.com) |
| 13 | Abey Belete | Wej Awramba Kebele representative of the communal grazing land community | Chair for the committee | 0918094918 |  |
| 14 | Zelalem Lema | ILRI | Research Officer | 0911725449 | [z.lema@cgiar.org](mailto:z.lema@cgiar.org) |
| 15 | Aberra Adie | ILRI | Research Assistant | 0910756003 | [a.adie@cgiar.org](mailto:a.adie@cgiar.org) |

**Photo story of showing the process of the pilot project main activities**

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**Awareness creation, training, land preparation, in pust supply, 2nd round training, weeding …**

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**Weeding by young, backyard fodder development by women, Dr Kindu’s and Abera’s visit, field days…**

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**Field day discussions, visit by Abera and Zelalem with TG…..**